RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 2nd May 1994/12 Vaisakha, 1916 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 481.

*481. [The questioners (Shri Anant Ram Jaiswal and Shri V. Gopalsamy) were absent. For answer *vide* Col... infra]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 482.

*482. [The questioner (Shri Ajit P. K. Jogi) was absent. For answer, *vide* Col. ....infra]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 483.

*483. [The questioners (Shri Ahmed Mohmedbhai Patel and Shri Suresh Pachouri) were absent. For answer *vide* Col..... infra].

MR. CHAIRMAN : We may complete all the questions today.

Question No. 484—Shri Gaya Singh.

Supply of Iron Ore by MMTC to Japan

*484. SHRI GAYA SINGH : †

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the quantity and prices of iron ore to be supplied by the MMTC to Japan during 1994-95 have been reduced;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the MMTC has reduced the quantity and price of its procurements from NMDC and private mine owners accordingly; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (d) The supplies of iron ore by MMTC to Japan in 1994-95 are likely to be about 2 lacs tonnes lower as compared to supplies made in 1993-94. The price of iron ore lumps and iron ore fines has been reduced by 5.9% and 9.5% respectively over 1993-94 prices. On account of the reduction in the export prices and hike in railway freight, MMTC has had to propose reduction in procurement prices of iron ore lumps and fines.

श्री गया सिंह : सभापति महोदय, मंत्री जी ने अभी अपने जवाब में कहा कि इस साल 1994-95 में दो लाख टन आयरन ओर का प्रोक्योरमेंट कम होने वाला है । मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि 1993-94 में 1991-92 के मुकाबले एक्सपोर्ट भी कम हुआ था और इस साल यह दो लाख टन, जो आप कह रहे हैं, दो लाख टन कम होगा, लेकिन उड़ीसा और बिहार के बरबिन, बड़े जामदा इलाके में खासतौर से प्राइवेट माइन्स के अंदर काम करने वाले जो लगभग 75 हजार मजदूर हैं उसमें 50 हजार जोबलैस होने वाले हैं और हमारा अनुमान है कि यह दो लाख से ज्यादा की कमी हो रही है । इसको मंत्री जी स्पष्ट

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Gaya Singh.

करेंगे ? साथ ही साथ हमारा जो सवाल था कि एम. एम. टी. सी. जापान को एक्सपोर्ट कर रहा है यह आयरन ओर, उसमें भी काफी कमी आई है और उसके चलते भी उस एरिया में बड़े पैमाने पर मजदूरों की छंटनी की संभावना है ? इस संबंध में मंत्री जी का उसमें जवाब नहीं है, वह दें ।

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please ask the question also. Yes, hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : Sir, what has been replied to is not less production but less export. In the very first sentence itself, it has been pointed out that the supplies of iron ore by MMTC to Japan in 1994-95 are likely to be about 2 lakh tonnes lower as compared to 1993-94. And this is the problem which is emerging, which the hon. Member has also referred to, that as result of continuous recession in steel industries all over the world, Japan, which is one of the major importers so far as Indian iron ore is concerned, has reduced its imports. Our export market to Japan, so far as iron ore is concerned, has come down in terms of percentage from 18.8 per cent to 14 per cent in 1994-95, as a result of which we are not in a position to export fully the iron ore produced by the mine-owners. And it is causing some problem. It is not only less imports, but they have also reduced the prices, as I have indicated, by 5.9 per cent and 9.5 per cent in the case of two types of ores. In two types of ores, the prices have been reduced as a result of which, these problems are coming.

श्री गया सिंह : सभापति महोदय, एम. एम. टी. सी. गोवा और बंगलौर छोड़कर, दूसरे हिस्से में प्राईवेट ओनर्स को यह अधिकार नहीं है एक्सपोर्ट करने का और जहां तक मेरी जानकारी है कि जापान और दूसरे देश से लोग प्राइवेट ओनर्स से डायरेक्ट एक्सपोर्ट करना चाहते हैं, लेकिन एम. एम. टी. सी. उस पर रोक लगाए हुए है। अगर उनसे संभव नहीं है तो क्या इसकी इजाजत दे सकते हैं ताकि बड़े पैमाने पर जो मजदूरों की छंटनी हो रही है, वह एक्सपोर्ट प्राईवेट ओनर्स डायरेक्ट करके उसको बचा सकते हैं ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Mr. Chairman, Sir, you will appreciate that an overall policy is not discussed during the Question Hour. But surely I have noted the suggestion of the hon. Member. Whether it will be canalised or not—except Goan iron ore, the other iron ores are canalised whether there will be decentralisation—this is a policy matter and I cannot respond to a policy matter during the Question Hour.

श्री जनार्दन यादव : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि मंत्री जी ने जवाब दिया है, तो बिहार में धातु की खानें बड़ी मात्रा में पाई जाती है और जैसे आयरन ओर के एक्सपोर्ट में कमी आने से मजदूरों को काम नहीं मिलेगा, तो क्या वहां के खान

के विकास के लिए, आयरन ओर के विकास के लिए या मजदूरों को काम दिलाने के लिए सरकार एक्सपोर्ट नीति में कोई शिथिलता बरतने जा रही है कि प्राइवेट पार्टी को भी एक्सपोर्ट करने का लाइसेंस मिले ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: As I mentioned in my reply to an earlier question, whatever the export policy is, we will have to look into it but there is no guarantee even for the private exporters who intend to export for getting better price. For example, Goan exporters are permitted to export privately and it is not canalised. But they are also getting less price. So, there is no guarantee when there is an overall recession—that more canalisation will fatch better price. Unfortunately, two major suppliers, Australia and Brazil are there who determine the price and when they offer at a lower price to Japan and other major consumers, naturally a country like ours will have to follow suit. We have taken it up with Australia and Brazil so that we can have some unified approach. But as I mentioned, it would be difficult for me to respond to a policy issue right during the Question Hour.

श्री राम दास अग्रवाल : सभापति महोदय, जैसा कि हम सब जानते हैं कि आयरन ओर एक्सपोर्ट में कमी हुई है और जापान ने खरीददारी कम की, इसके कारण ऐसा हो रहा है और उसके कारण मजदूर लोग बेकार हुए हैं । मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि दो प्रकार की माइनिंग होती है आयरन ओर में—मैकेनाइज्ड और मैन्युअल । मुझे अफसोस यह है कि इस सारे का प्रभाव, एक्सपोर्ट कम होने का, केवल मैन्युअल माइनिंग पर पड़ा है और मैकेनाइज्ड जो माइनिंग हो रही है, उस पर इसका कोई असर नहीं पड़ा । तो मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं, आखिर इस देश के अंदर मजदूर को काम देने के मामले में प्राथमिकता होनी चाहिए, कि मैकेनाइज्ड माइनिंग जो काम कर रही है, उनकी प्रोडक्शन कम करके और जो मैन्युअल माइनिंग चल रही है उसके अंदर वापिस पुनर्स्थापित करने की कोई योजना आप बना सकते हैं ? आखिर मजदूरों को काम देना, यह प्राथमिकता है इस देश के अंदर और उनके रोजगार को बनाए रखना, बरकरार रखना, यह अत्यंत आवश्यक है । इसलिए मंत्री महोदय अपनी बाहर की नीति में तो नहीं परिवर्तन कर सकते, लेकिन कम से कम इस देश के अंदर मजदूरों को काम देने के अंदर मैकेनाइज्ड माइनिंग की प्रोडक्शन को कम करके मैन्युअल माइनिंग को प्रारम्भ कराने का प्रयत्न करेंगे ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: From the point of view of employment, surely the manual mining would help people get more jobs but at the same time, the cost of production will be more.....

SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: I am sorry,.....

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Let me complete; I am on my legs. On the other hand, if we go in for manual mining, the cost of production will be more compared to other countries which are going through mechanised mining and reducing their cost of production. They will be more competitive as I mentioned in the case of Australia and Brazil and in this case we shall have to take a balanced view.

SHRI G. G. SWELL: Sir, it is well-known that there is a recession in the production of cars in Japan and a recession in the export of cars from Japan to the rest of the world. I would like to know whether this development in Japan has anything to do with the reduction of prices

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : As I mentioned, overall production in steel all over the world is going through a recession, including in Japan. Japan is the major steel-producing country. There, not only in respect of cars, but in respect of various other products also, where steel is the major raw material, the whole line of manufacture of these types of products, to some extent, has been affected .

SHRI K. R. MALKANI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, manual mining need not necessarily always be more expensive than mechanised mining. Has the Government conducted any study in the matter ? Nobody suggests that one thing should be completely stopped and another given full play. A balance has to be there. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Government has made any study of the matter as to how to balance these two things.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, I would pass on this suggestion to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Mines.

Excise Duty Relief to Consumers

*485. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : †

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 5 given in the Rajya Sabha on 26th July, 1993 and state :

(a) the names of industries which have failed to pass on the excise reliefs or have partially reduced the prices;

(b) whether Government have made any assessment to know the approximate amount of excise duty relief passed on the consumers and the amount of excise relief retained by the trade and if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the response of the Ministries as referred to in parts (c) and (d) of the answer and what further action each economic Ministry has taken in this regard;

(d) whether any action against any industry has been taken so far for not adhering to Government's instructions; and

(e) whether it is mandatory on the trade to pass on the excise relief to the consumers ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A. K. ANTONY) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) In the budget of 1993-94, large duty concessions were announced covering a variety of products. In the meeting with the Minister of Civil Supplies, while the industry associations claimed that duty concessions were passed on to the consumers, the consumer organisations disputed the claim. As this Ministry did not have any infrastructure to verify the claims, it requested Bureau of Industrial Costs & Prices to conduct a quick study on some ten items to see whether the duty concessions had been passed on to the consumers. The BICP conducted a study of all the ten items in

† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi.